

Message from the Chief

Chief's Memo – August 30, 2006

***Recognition of CDF Employees, CDF
Responds Out of State, Inversion Update***

I recently celebrated my second anniversary as a CDF employee, having been appointed as the State Fire Marshal on August 16, 2004. These have been two of the best years in my career. Since becoming Director this year, I have had the privilege of working with many CDF employees throughout the department. I also have had the opportunity to see the level of appreciation and respect that others have for CDF, the work we do, and the manner in which we carry out our mission. I have heard many positive comments about CDF employees from various stakeholders, other state agencies, local government, Agency Secretaries, and directly from the Governor.



Employee recognition comes in various fashions. I am a firm believer that it is very important to any organization to recognize the accomplishments of its members. Recognition should be genuine and come frequently from the organizational leadership to their employees. Some recognition can be very informal and come from one's immediate supervisor, a hand written note, or a pat on the back. Other recognition can be very formal and come from as high up as the Governor.

I have recently discovered that some CDF "Medal of Valor" recipients have not yet received those medals. I am working with Tom Sawyer, Governor Schwarzenegger's Public Safety Liaison, to remedy this serious oversight on our part. We are looking for a time at the end of fire season, late October to early November, to have a ceremony with the Governor and present those medals.

On September 11, we will be participating in a ceremony with the Governor to remember and honor the emergency responders and victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. This event will take place on the east steps of the Capitol between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. CDF employees who are able to attend are welcome.

On October 14, the California Fire Foundation will be holding its annual ceremony honoring the firefighters who have fallen in the line of duty. Patrick George Henry's name will be added to the California Firefighters Memorial this year. I encourage your attendance.

In other recognitions, CDF was well represented at the recent Governor's Employee Safety Awards Ceremony presented by the Office of Risk Management of the Department of General Services.



All CDF employees should be proud for being singled out and receiving a Departmental Award for the greatest reduction in vehicle accidents among departments with over six million miles driven from calendar year 2004 to 2005.

CDF received a Group Award for its New Generation Fire Shelter Evaluation and Training Committee. This committee did extensive research on the "New Generation Fire Shelter" and made significant recommendations for improvement. These recommendations were reported to the United States Forest Service, which worked with the contracted vendor to effect necessary safety changes. Without this research, CDF and USFS firefighters' lives would have been at serious risk during deployment of this new generation fire shelter. Awardees and committee members included Assistant Chief Steve Hutchison, the chairman, from the CDF Academy; Battalion Chief Kim Bolan from South Ops; BC Vivian De La Rosa, also from the CDF Academy; and BC Tom Foley of South Ops

An Individual Award was given to Fire Captain-Paramedic Terry Heidman of the San Diego Unit for researching and initiating the use of an inexpensive flashing device to increase safety of emergency personnel working on highways and other roads during times of reduced visibility. This battery powered device with

five blinking LED lights that can be seen for a mile. It can be worn on the outer layer of clothing or used as a non-flammable road flare.

Out of State Responses...and more

Many of our talented employees are currently out of state or just returning from an out-of-state assignment as requests for CDF assistance have been high. In the past few weeks we have sent personnel and resources to Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Georgia, and Neverland!

I spoke to Pat McElroy, Washington State Forester, last Sunday and he was very grateful for the assistance CDF provided in their resource request for use of the DC-10 under contract to CDF. To support the DC-10 order to the State of Washington we sent an OV-10 tactical aircraft with pilot and air tactical group supervisor (ATGS) to act as lead plane. CDF Aviation Management Unit (AMU) sent two people to assist the Washington AMU staff. We assisted in the training of the Washington Department of Natural Resources employees (ATGS and lead plane). The USFS gave permission to reload the aircraft at its Moses Lake Air Attack Base. All costs will be reimbursed.

We also sent two CDF strike teams on a fire in Elko, Nevada along with OES local government strike teams. I received word that our personnel did an outstanding job and saved a number of homes as the fire was burning into the town. There was a "burn over" of some California Bureau of Land Management (BLM) firefighters who were transported to the hospital, treated and released.

FEMA activated Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) CA TF-6 (Task Force 6: Riverside) Type 3 Swift Water Rescue Component (28-total members) to respond in support of Hurricane Ernesto. Fire Captain Bob Wood (plans) and Mechanic Marty Adams began driving the rescue cache to Atlanta, Georgia or other parts of Southeastern US. FC John Aleman (hazmat) also responded.

CDF even sent resources to "Neverland." We had three dozers and nine engines on the "Figueroa" fire near Buellton. This is near the Neverland Ranch owned by entertainer Michael Jackson.

Inversion Update

On another important subject, I had hoped to deliver good news about the "inversion" fix by my second anniversary (a self-imposed goal). I want to assure you that it is at the top of my priority list. We are in discussions at the directors' level between CDF, DPA, and Finance. The final meeting on this subject should occur on September 11 or 12. I remain optimistic that the "right solution" can be reached very soon. DPA has been rolling out compensation adjustments for various supervisors and managers over other bargaining units over the past few weeks. All have been retroactive back to July 1, 2006.

In closing, I am very appreciative for the patience exhibited by all supervisors and managers affected by the "inversion issue." I do understand that recognition of employee performance also takes the form of compensation and benefits which are fair and equitable. I also am cognizant of the need for the "right solution" that provides an incentive for 84 hour BCs to be willing to promote for the next two years. I am working toward that end.

Regards,



Ruben Grijalva, Chief
Director / State Fire Marshal

Cooperative Fire, Training and Safety

The Half Moon Bay and Point Montara Fire District Boards voted to accept CDF's proposal for providing fire protection and emergency medical services to their communities through a Schedule A agreement. Steve Dunlap will be coordinating headquarters' program functions in support of developing this new contract.

The Cooperative Fire Program (Karen Mayer) processed Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) Program applications and grant award packages which were mailed out to successful applicants last week.

The Co-op Fire and Training programs have been working with the Budget office to provide field visits to the new analysts from the Legislative Analyst Office and the Department of Finance. So far, the group has had an opportunity to tour Amador El Dorado Unit and the CDF Academy.

Ken McLean, Keith Larkin and Ken Pimlott met with the Interagency POST academy partners (State Parks and Fish & Game) last week to discuss the long-term relationship at the CDF Academy. Although State Parks will be providing their own POST Academy in the next two years in order to meet the large number of candidates they need, both Parks and Fish & Game are committed to the long term interagency academy.

The CDF Academy will be standing down from instruction during the next several weeks to focus on facility repairs, course update/development and other activities that must be completed when there are no students on the compound.

Resource Management

CDF joined the California Climate Action Registry in June 2006. One of the obligations that goes with Registry membership is the recording of the Department Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. The Department chose to have

its first reporting year be 2004. Thanks to all the effort of all CDF Units, a summary of GHG emissions has been completed and reported to the Registry. CDF emitted 31,700 metric tons of Carbon Dioxide from its equipment and facilities in 2004. The next step is to obtain third party verification of the emissions. Efforts have begun to collect the data to document CDF's 2005 emissions.

CDF participated in a closed session on development of the federal "Roadmap for Bioenergy & Biobased Products in the United States." This was one of three sessions held nationwide by partnership preparing the roadmap. The federal Biomass Research and Development Technical Advisory Committee will be completing and releasing the final document this fall.